

Edexcel AS/A-level History

BRITAIN

1625–1701

CONFLICT, REVOLUTION AND SETTLEMENT

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My revision planner



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2 Religion: conflict and dissent, 1625–88

Laud's policies and religious uniformity

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The Anglican Church had been established by Elizabeth I as a 'middle way' between Catholicism and European Protestantism. Many traditional features of Catholic worship had been retained, such as priests' vestments and incense, but Anglican beliefs reflected the teachings of the Swiss reformer John Calvin. The 'middle way' was an uneasy compromise, but it ensured religious peace for many years.

By 1625 there were growing divisions within Anglicanism about the church's beliefs and practices:

- Arminianism was a set of beliefs which promoted church services involving rituals and formal ceremony. Arminians followed the traditional Catholic belief in free will, which meant that individuals could choose whether or not to follow a path to salvation (see page 6).
- Puritans were Anglicans who opposed rituals and priestly vestments. They wanted to purify services by promoting simplicity rather than ceremony. Puritans were also concerned for people's moral improvement and supported action against moral misbehaviour, such as adultery and drunkenness. They also believed in the **Calvinist** doctrine of predestination – that God had already chosen those who would be saved, regardless of their behaviour during their lifetime (see page 8).

William Laud, a prominent Arminian, was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury in 1633. He worked to impose greater religious uniformity on church services:

- The communion table was moved to the east end of the church, and was railed off from the congregation.
- Vestments and incense were to be used in services, and hymns and sacred music were encouraged.
- Stained-glass windows were to be installed in churches.

These Arminian measures angered the Puritans because they stressed the outward forms of worship. Puritans believed that Laud was moving the church in the direction of Catholicism. Laud further offended the Puritans by issuing the Book of Sports in 1633, which allowed people to participate in traditional sports and pastimes on Sundays.

Many people welcomed Laud's reforms because they imposed fewer demands on those who attended Sunday services. They also approved of the reduction in the number of sermons, which were popular with the Puritans.

The imposition of Laudianism

To ensure that Laud's measures were imposed, visitations by the agents of bishops in their **dioceses** were conducted more thoroughly and there is evidence of the records of these visitations being personally reviewed by Laud and Charles. Laud made use of the church courts, notably the **Court of High Commission** to punish, through fines or imprisonment, those who refused to implement Laudianism.

Many Puritan clergy were unable to accept the changes to church services. After 1633 thousands of clergy, along with many of their followers, emigrated to the American colonies, where they could worship freely without fear of persecution.

Many of the gentry also opposed Laud's actions. These men were often strongly Calvinist, and regarded Laud's innovations as disrupting the Elizabethan 'middle way'. Their opposition grew with the trial of Prynne, Bastwick and Burton in 1637. They were middle-class professionals charged with smuggling anti-Arminian tracts from abroad and publishing attacks on the bishops. They were sentenced to have their ears mutilated and were imprisoned for life. Laud's opponents believed that the harsh sentences were out of proportion to their offences. Attacks on Laud were to figure prominently in the meeting of the Long Parliament in 1640.

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Simple essay style

Below is a sample exam question. Use your own knowledge and the information on the opposite page to produce a plan for this question. Choose four general points, and provide three pieces of specific information to support each general point. Once you have planned your essay, write the introduction and conclusion for the essay. The introduction should list the points to be discussed in the essay. The conclusion should summarise the key points and justify which point was the most important.

How accurate is it to say Laud's Arminian policies weakened the Church of England in the period 1633–40?



Developing an argument

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Below are a sample A-level exam-style question, a list of key points to be made in the essay and a paragraph from the essay. Read the question, the plan and the sample paragraph. Rewrite the paragraph in order to develop an argument. Your paragraph should explain why the factor discussed in the paragraph is linked to the question.

How successful were Laud's attempts to impose religious uniformity on the Church of England in the years 1633–40?

Key points:

- Laud's Arminian measures
- The imposition of Laud's measures
- Support for Laud's reforms
- Calvinist opposition
- The extent of opposition by 1640

Sample paragraph:

During the 1630s Archbishop Laud introduced a series of reforms within the Anglican Church. He did not reform the church's doctrines, but wanted uniformity in religious services. Laud's measures provoked little opposition from most people, but many Puritans were not prepared to accept them, and a large number of Puritans actually emigrated to America in order to worship in their own way. However, the opposition of the largely Calvinist gentry limited the success of Laud's actions, and their grievances featured prominently when the Long Parliament met in 1640.

The Church of England, 1640–62

In the years to 1640 the Church of England played a key role in the political and social life of the country. The years 1640–60 saw the virtual destruction of the Church of England as the centre of religious life.

Parliament's reordering of the church, 1640–53

From 1643 parliament introduced a series of measures to reform the Church of England:

- The office of bishop was abolished in favour of a **Presbyterian** form of government, which meant that church rule was carried out by organisations of deacons and local elders.
- The Book of Common Prayer was banned and was replaced by the Directory of Worship.
- Arminian features of churches, such as stained glass and statues, were removed.
- Traditional Christian festivals such as Christmas and Easter were no longer celebrated. Instead, they became days of fasting and prayer.
- In 1650 a Toleration Act ended the requirement of compulsory attendance at the national church's services.

These changes led to thousands of parish priests being expelled from their homes. Many bishops were imprisoned or exiled, or simply went into hiding.

The Cromwellian Church, 1653–60

One of Cromwell's key aims was to bring about a religious and social reformation, which meant establishing godly rule and an improvement in public morality on the lines suggested by the Puritans.

The Instrument of Government of 1653 was England's first written constitution. As well as establishing the republican form of government, it granted liberty of worship to all except Catholics and the more extreme Protestant sects.

The restoration of Anglicanism, 1660–62

The Restoration in May 1660 restored the Anglican Church, as well as the Stuart monarchy. Charles II had demonstrated in the Declaration of Breda that he favoured religious toleration for non-conformists and Catholics. The king and his chief minister, Clarendon, sought to broaden the Church of England to accommodate moderate Protestant groups that had emerged during and after the Civil War. In 1661 the Savoy House Conference met to discuss the issue, but members of the Cavalier Parliament opposed the toleration offered at Breda. Instead they imposed a narrow religious settlement that became known as the Clarendon Code:

- The Corporation Act of 1661 required all involved in local government to be communicant members of the Church of England.
- The Act of Uniformity of 1662 made the Book of Common Prayer compulsory in all churches.
- Under the Conventicle Act of 1664, religious meetings of five or more people were forbidden.
- The Five Mile Act of 1665 established that clergymen who had been expelled from their parish for refusing to conform to the Act of Uniformity could not go within five miles of their former parish.

Neither Clarendon nor the king supported the narrow and vindictive religious settlement, but they were forced to agree to parliament's wishes. Two thousand clergy were deprived of their livings for refusing the Act of Uniformity – many of these followed the example of previous Puritans and emigrated to America.

Although the Anglican Church had been restored in the 1660s, it could no longer pretend to have exclusive control over the country's religious beliefs. Despite the persecution of religious dissenters, non-conformists remained a significant minority within many parts of the country.

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! Complete the paragraph

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Below are a sample exam question and a paragraph written in answer to this question. The paragraph contains a point and specific examples, but lacks a concluding analytical link back to the question. Complete the paragraph, adding this link in the space provided.

To what extent were religious tensions in England reduced in the years 1640–60?

Challenges to the authority of Charles I and the Church of England from 1640 allowed free expression of religious ideas that had previously been suppressed. The civil war and revolution merely brought further development of radical ideas and the emergence of new religious groups. Parliament in the years from 1640 sought to broaden the church and allow more freedom for such groups to worship freely.

i Turning assertion into argument

Below are a sample exam question and a series of assertions. Read the exam question and then add a justification to each of the assertions to turn it into an argument.

How accurate is it to say that the Restoration's religious settlement created more problems than it solved?

Charles' aim of religious toleration was unrealistic.

The Restoration's religious settlement was shaped by parliament, not by Charles.

The Restoration's religious settlement brought stability.

The growth of religious non-conformity: Puritanism under Charles I

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Puritans were members of the Church of England who opposed Elizabeth I's 'middle way'. They remained within the church because they supported Anglican doctrines which reflected the views of John Calvin. However, they were strong opponents of the rituals of Anglican services, which they believed retained too many features of Catholic worship. They wanted further reforms that would implement a more purified and Protestant form of worship.

Puritan opposition

Puritans opposed most of Laud's policies which promoted the Arminian beliefs on the 'beauty of holiness'. They suspected that Laud and Charles were both determined to restore Catholicism as England's official religion.

Puritan opposition, though strong in London and in provinces such as East Anglia, was not often expressed openly. Many Puritans were politically conservative, and the gentry knew that they had much to lose from opposing the king. The imposition of Arminianism also limited the scope for Puritan opposition:

- Puritan books and pamphlets were censored, and texts brought from abroad were seized and destroyed.
- Although predestination was a part of Anglican doctrine, preaching on predestination was banned.
- Puritan preachers were no longer financed by town councils or by individuals.

It was only the most committed Puritans who were prepared to openly oppose Laudianism:

- In 1633 the Puritans of the parish of St Gregory's in London unsuccessfully tried to use the courts to oppose Charles' policy of railing off the altar.
- In 1638 the Puritan **John Lilburne** was whipped through the streets of London for distributing anti-Laudian pamphlets.

Open opposition to Laudianism from the Puritans was rare. Many reluctantly accepted the reforms of the 1630s and waited for better times. Others simply chose to emigrate.

Emigration

It is estimated that 80,000 Puritans emigrated from England during the 1630s. Many settled in Ireland, the West Indies and the Dutch Republic, and around 20,000 settled in the American colony of Massachusetts. Whole families migrated together in search of the religious freedom that Laud's policies denied them.

With the breakdown of Charles' authority after the religion-inspired rebellion of Presbyterian Scots in 1637, some Puritans began to return from overseas. When Charles recalled parliament in 1640, opposition to him among MPs was led by Puritans such as John Pym.



Eliminate irrelevance

Below are a sample exam question and a paragraph written in answer to this question. Read the paragraph and identify parts of the paragraph that are not directly relevant to the question. Draw a line through the information that is irrelevant and justify your deletions in the margin.

How accurate is it to say that Puritans were a serious threat to the authority of Charles I in the years 1628 to 1638?

When Charles I came to throne in 1625 he was determined to move the Church of England towards Arminianism. With the appointment of William Laud as Bishop of London in 1628, Charles' imposition of Arminianism gathered pace. Puritans already saw the measures taken by Charles as a drift towards Catholicism, and the more aggressive implementation of Laudianism in the 1630s further increased their fears about Charles' intentions. In the 1630s some Puritans led opposition to Charles' altar policy. Other radical Puritans distributed pamphlets attacking Charles' Laudian policies. Many Puritans, however, chose to emigrate to the Dutch Republic or New England. In doing so they were showing that they were opposed to Charles' Laudianism, but they were also accepting that there was little they could do about it.



Simple essay style

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How accurate is it to say that Puritanism was not a serious threat to Charles I in the years 1625 to 1638?